

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH DR. RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM,
VENEZUELA'S FOREIGN MINISTER

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

1. SECRETARY MET FOR ABOUT FIFTY MINUTES ON AFTERNOON
JANUARY 29 WITH DR. ESCOVAR. VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR
BURELLI RIVAS, MINISTER COUNSELOR PAPARONI, ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ROGERS, INTERPRETER ANTHONY HERVAS, AND DESK
OFFICER SONANDRES ALSO PRESENT.

2. MEETING WAS AMICABLE AND FRANK. DISCUSSION CENTERED ON
US-LA RELATIONS (WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO US TRADE BILL,
POSTPONEMENT OF BUENOS AIRES MFM, AND APRIL OAS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY) AND ON USG-GOV RELATIONS. SECRETARY GAVE HIS
VIEWS ON RECENT LATIN AMERICAN ACTIONS AGAINST USG.
ESCOVAR, WHO PRESENTED SECRETARY WITH COPY OF HIS BOOK,
WAS CONCILIATORY IN HIS APPROACH. BOTH AGREED TO
DISCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL ISSUES.

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3. SECRETARY BEGAN CONVERSATION BY FRANKLY CALLING BUENOS AIRES MFM POSTPONEMENT A TACTICAL MISTAKE, CONTRASTING ITS BACK PAGE PRESS TREATMENT WITH THE VERY CONSIDERABLE EXPOSURE WHICH HIS VISIT TO BA WOULD HAVE BROUGHT LATIN AMERICA VIEWPOINT IN PRINCIPAL US NEWSPAPERS.

LATIN AMERICA KNEW EXECUTIVE BRANCH POSITION ON TRADE BILL AND HIS INABILITY OBTAIN QUICK CHANGES. HE ADDED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER WITHOUT US. IN SUM, SECRETARY OBSERVED THAT ANTI-FOREIGN SENTIMENT WAS CURRENTLY SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN US AND THAT FRANKLY, WE NEEDED A LITTLE HELP FROM LATIN AMERICANS.

4. TURNING TO US-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS, SECRETARY CALLED FOR REVIEW OF BILATERAL ISSUES WHICH COULD BE CONDUCTED AT ANY TIME. SAID MIDDLE EAST MAY CAUSE HIM TO DELAY TENTATIVELY PLANNED FEBRUARY VISIT TO VENEZUELA AND OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES BUT HE EXPRESSED HOPE VISIT COULD BE CONCLUDED PRIOR TO APRIL 16 OPENING OF OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH THE SECRETARY LOOKED FORWARD TO ATTENDING. HE SAID THAT TIES OF GOV TO LDC'S AND US TO EUROPE AND ACROSS PACIFIC COULD COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER WITHOUT EITHER COUNTRY ABANDONING ITS OWN INTERESTS. SECRETARY ASKED FOREIGN MINISTER TO CONVEY HIS WARM PERSONAL REGARDS TO PRESIDENT PEREZ WHOM HE REFERRED TO AS DYNAMIC LEADER.

5. ESCOVAR, FOR HIS PART, EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF CONGRESSIONAL PROCEDURES REGARDING TRADE BILL, HE RECOMMENDED BEST FORUM FOR CARRYING FORWARD "NEW DIALOGUE" WAS OAS, ORGANIZATION IN NEED OF PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE. ESCOVAR FOUND IDEA OF BILATERAL REVIEW EXCELLENT AND ONE WHICH COULD BE CONDUCTED THROUGH OUR EMBASSIES. FOREIGN MINISTER STRESSED OPEC WAS ECONOMIC, NOT POLITICAL, AND THAT VENEZUELA SOUGHT NEW ECONOMIC ORDER, NOT A POLICY OF HOSTILITY TOWARD US. FOREIGN MINISTER REGRETTED LACK OF DISSEMINATION IN US OF LATIN AMERICAN AND VENEZUELAN VIEWPOINT.

6. MEMCON FOLLOWS. KISSINGER

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